

LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL 10th DECEMBER 2018

1. The Council has received a letter of thanks from the Leicester City Football Club following receipt of the Book of Condolence opened in the Council Offices in respect of the tragic helicopter crash at the King Power Stadium on the 27th October. The Football Club expressed much appreciation for the Council doing this and all messages are being referred to the families concerned.
2. I want to congratulate all the winners from our District that did so well in the Leicestershire Tourism Awards on the 29th November. The Council was nominated for two awards but a special mention must go to the Lutterworth Real Ale Classroom for Best Pub Experience, Boboli in Kibworth for best casual dining experience, Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground for most innovative tourist experience, Waterloo Farm Shop winning Best Farm Shop (with Farndon Fields Farm Shop being highly commended) and to Market Harborough for winning best town award. A lot of people in our district worked extremely hard to win these awards against some pretty stiff competition. They all deserve our congratulations and it just goes to show what a great place the Harborough District is to visit!
3. I congratulate the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground for being awarded a £4,000,000 funding grant from the Government to assist Bruntingthorpe to establish a test track for autonomous vehicles at their site. I think this is brilliant news at the cutting edge of the exciting world of advances in motor technology. Well done to Dave Walton and Paul Atkin and their team that led on this bid.
4. I am delighted with the news that the retailer Joules has been given planning permission for its landmark new Headquarters in Market Harborough. This is a huge statement of intent so far as the economic vibrancy of the District is concerned and particularly of Market Harborough.
5. I want to give publicity to the free car parking arrangements on the Council's car parks for each Saturday in December. Previously the arrangement has been for the Saturdays leading up to Christmas so I am pleased we have been able to extend it beyond Christmas. Free parking in our council owned car parks should be a real boost to our valuable independent shops in both of our key market towns. We hope that this coupled with the effort that both towns put into celebrating Christmas through decorations, lights and Christmas trees that it will enhance the already unique shopping experience that our local towns bring. I would also like to thank the retailers of Church Street Market Harborough for their patience and understanding

in dealing with the changes made to the Christmas lights this year and look forward to working with them next year to find a solution.

6. I was also pleased as to how quickly the Council responded to the disappointment of the Church Street, Market Harborough traders after they realised the cross street lights would not be able to be hung this year. We met with the traders and offered a solution for this year which I believe found favour – and we have been able to open a proper dialogue with the traders which will continue throughout next year so as to avoid any such disappointments from happening again. I think we can all agree that the Christmas lights here in Market Harborough are excellent this year - as indeed they are throughout the District.
7. I also wanted to remind members of the Councils policies which seek to protect staff and members from any sort of bullying or intimidation from others. Members and staff must be reassured they can give their views in meetings or for members who engage in social media knowing any such ill behaviour will not be tolerated by this Council. Such instances are thankfully extremely rare in this District but nonetheless a reminder of the policy should be made from time to time.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish all councillors and their families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Cllr Neil Bannister

7th December 2018